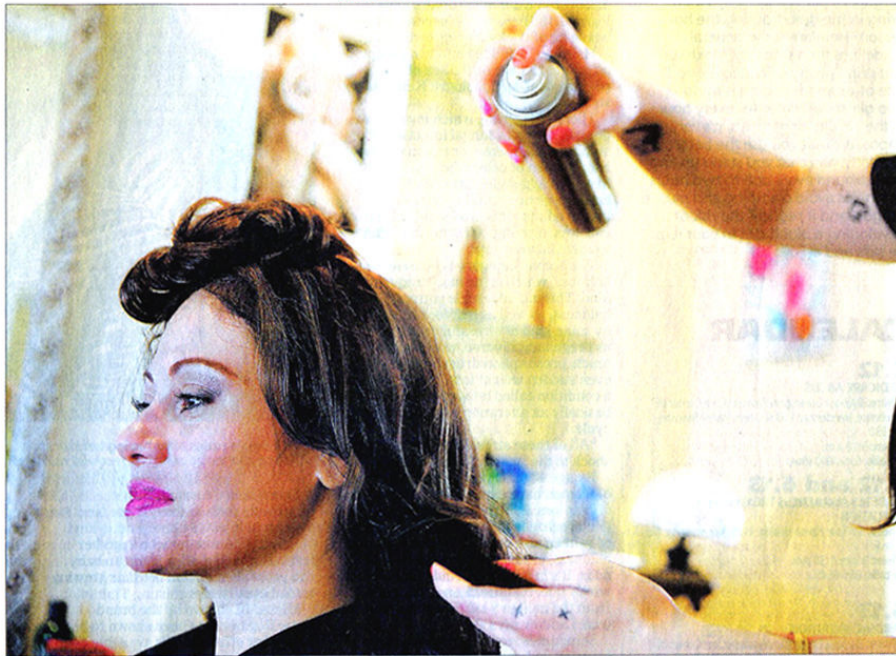


CONFIDENCE BOOSTER



PHOTOS by RONDA CHURCHILL/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL
Lisette Davila has her hair styled at the Hair Club for Men and Women in the Chase Building at 500 N. Rainbow Blvd. Davila, who suffered hair loss, has received nonsurgical hair treatments for the past year. She said regaining lost hair restored her confidence.

Treatments help ease distresses over tresses

Local woman regains hair through nonsurgical procedures

By **SONYA PADGETT**

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

When Lisette Davila won a contest for being the biggest soap opera fan in Las Vegas, she thought she would get some new makeup and maybe a dress.

Davila, 40, ended up with much more than that. She got a new head of hair and regained her self-confidence.

"I definitely have more confidence now. My spark came back," says Davila, a Henderson resident and mother of two. "I've always been outgoing, very social. When I lost my hair, I was like a hermit, hiding out in my apartment."

Forgive her if she sounds a little like Sally Field in an infomercial. But Davila means it when she says a wig gave her new life.

About a year ago, Davila noticed her thick, dark hair was thinning. She had just transferred from Chicago to a new job as a client services coordinator for a local pet hospital. Sixty-, even 70-hour weeks were the norm, so her hair was the last thing on her mind. Then she got laid off. And the hair loss increased.

More than 40 million men in the United States experience hair loss each year, according to statistics from Hair Club. But 30 million women also lose their hair annually. Hair is very important in



Stylist Dominique Bruhn styles Lisette Davila's hair at the Hair Club for Men and Women.

society, says Roy Jones, a hair transplant surgeon with Hair Club.

"It's the one thing that is very visible and it's about our image. (Hair loss) is just not accepted by society, especially for women," Jones says. "It's not considered normal."

Davila tried over-the-counter wigs,

even powder that matches her hair color. It wasn't until she won a makeover from "The Doctors" that she found a solution she could tolerate. At first, she hid that she had lost so much of her hair that she

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Genetics often to blame, cure harder to find

► TRESSES: Genetics often to blame, cure harder to find

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could see her scalp. But her daughter told the producers that Davila needed a boost for her self-esteem because her hair was so thin.

The makeover included a nutrition meal plan, delivered to her home, a new gown and a hair restoration system from Hair Club.

During the six months that she tried to treat her own hair loss, Davila discovered what many others have learned, the hard way: There aren't a whole lot of tricks for regrowing hair.

Hair loss is divided into two groups, no matter the age or the sex of the person, local dermatologist Ken Landow says.

There is scarring, which involves a disease such as a fungal infection or autoimmune disease, or trauma to the hair. Women of color who wear their hair in a tight style during childhood can experience scarring-related hair loss as adults. This is a leading cause of hair loss in young, African-American women, Landow says.

The second category is nonscarring hair loss, which is the most frequent kind. This includes male pattern baldness, as well as hair loss caused by some kind of stressful event such as pregnancy, divorce, working too much, prescription drugs, surgery or even sudden weight loss. This leads to a condition called telogen effluvium, basically an alteration in the hair growth cycle.

"All of these stressful things cause a shock to the system," Landow says.

By age 40 to 50 years old, 50 percent of women have experienced some kind of hair loss, Landow says. What people don't realize is that a significant number of women also experience male pattern baldness, or androgenic alopecia, he adds. It's in the genes. And that old wives' tale, that baldness is inherited from the mother's side? Not always true, Landow says.

Sometimes, you can have both scarring and nonscarring hair loss.

It's traumatic for anyone to lose hair, Landow says, but society is more accepting when it happens to men. Women are not expected to lose their hair and when it happens, it can be especially devastating.

The human head has anywhere from 100,000 to 150,000 hairs at any given time. Hair is in a constant growth cycle with new hair growing in and old hair falling out. It is normal to lose up to about 100 hairs daily, Landow says.

When a man begins to lose his hair from androgenic alopecia, hair falls out of the crown and top of the scalp. Rarely does it fall out from the sides. Women with the same condition lose hair from all over the head. That is why women don't always realize that they are losing their hair. And it's also why it can be easier for women to hide their hair loss.



RONDA CHURCHILL/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL
Lisette Davila poses after having her hair styled at Hair Club for Men and Women. After suffering hair loss, Davila has received nonsurgical hair treatments for the past year.

There aren't many effective treatments for hair loss. There is no way to prevent it, at least the genetic kind of hair loss. A woman who loses her hair a few weeks after having a baby can probably count on her hair growing back, Landow says.

Minoxidil, known by the brand name Rogaine, has been shown to be somewhat effective. It's available over-the-counter in two strengths, 2 percent for women and 5 percent for men.

A pill called spironolactone blocks testosterone in the skin, which can help prevent hair loss, although that is an off-label use of the drug. High levels of testosterone can cause hair loss, Landow says.

Finasteride, known by the brand name Propecia, is not recommended for women because it can cause birth defects in male children. But it is sometimes prescribed for those who have gone through menopause, Landow says.

Some believe laser combs work, but Landow says he's never had success with them. Plus, they are costly, about \$500. In the next few years, a product used to promote eyelash growth, Latisse, may be approved as a treatment for hair loss.

Hair transplant is sometimes an option. Long considered a treatment for men, more women have been receiving them during the past decade, Jones says. He does about 400 transplants a year in his region, which includes Las Vegas.

"A lot of women are very good candidates and they get very good results," Jones says.

Still, many women resist transplants. About 3 to 4 percent of his patients are female. Hair systems, or wigs, are another possibility. Davila has the Hair Club hair system called Biomatrix, which is matched to her own hair. It is replaced every few weeks.

The cause of her hair loss has yet to be discovered. Blood tests didn't reveal a cause. Davila, who had a hysterectomy several years ago, does have a male relative who suffers from male pattern baldness.

Landow recommends that women who are concerned about losing their hair should see their doctor or dermatologist. If a medical condition exists, treatment of it may result in hair growing back.

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